

Jake Anderson, *TwinCities Business*

The Union Depot project is expected to create 3,000 jobs between January 2011 and the end of 2012, and it will likely act as "Minnesota's link to the Midwest high-speed rail network."

Minnesota Congresswoman Betty McCollum announced Monday that the U.S. Department of Transportation will award \$40 million to fund renovation of the Union Depot in downtown St. Paul.

The grant adds to \$35 million in stimulus funds awarded to the project in February.

Union Depot is located in downtown St. Paul's historic Lowertown area, a vibrant neighborhood along the Mississippi River. It was built between 1918 and 1923 on the site of an earlier train station, which was destroyed by fire in 1915.

According to McCollum, the project will create 3,000 jobs between January 2011 and the end of 2012. The depot is slated to reopen as a transportation hub in September 2012.

The overall price tag for the renovation is about \$150 million, according to Julio Mangine, property management director for Ramsey County. Mangine said that-in addition to the \$40 million federal grant yet to be disbursed-the project has received approximately \$84 million through other rounds of funding.

In December, a team led by M.A. Mortenson Company was chosen to work on the project. Minneapolis-based Mortenson said at that time that the majority of the work associated with the renovation will be awarded to Minnesota businesses-and the work will create a significant number of jobs during the project's design and construction phases.

"Transforming the Union Depot into a multi-modal transportation hub will make St. Paul-and the entire state of Minnesota-more economically competitive," McCollum said in a statement.

She said that the grant comes from a high-speed passenger rail program-an indication that "the Union Depot is Minnesota's link to the Midwest high-speed rail network."

Union Depot will serve Amtrak, local and interstate buses, the Central Corridor light rail line-and, according to McCollum's announcement, it will eventually serve a high-speed rail to Chicago.